

# The "Report on Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen" (Prisoner's Report) of 12 June 1945

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One of the earliest postwar sources about Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp is the so-called "Prisoner's Report" which was compiled under the supervision of Hellmut Bock, a communist and former inmate of the camp. The first draft was ready by 7 May, just two weeks after the SS had left the camp. The German original of this first draft has been lost, but an English translation has survived. In the following weeks the report underwent several changes. Quite obviously the Soviet victors, acting through a sub-commission of the "Extraordinary State Commission" (ESC) which carried out investigations in the camp, figured as "commissioning editors." Altogether eight versions of the report exist. A comparison of their contents is highly revealing, as it shows considerable differences. There can be no doubt whatsoever that the Soviet investigators influenced the final version of the "Sachsenhausen Death Camp", which is tenaciously propagated even today, from the very beginning.

## 1. On the Genesis of the "Prisoner's Report"

On 21 April Sachsenhausen was evacuated, however between 2,400 and 3,400 prisoners were left behind in the camp, among them 2,000 – 3,000 sick and convalescent patients housed in the camp hospital and other buildings, 12 physicians (all of them prisoners and foreign nationals) and 25 orderlies.<sup>[1]</sup> Some stockmen (who had been employed at the hog-fattening farm and the angora rabbit breeding farm), gardeners, kitchen personnel and bakers also stayed behind; so did a group of about 40 Communist prisoners who had hidden in the camp because they wanted to welcome the Red Army, their comrades and liberators, rather than being evacuated. The battle of Berlin was still in full swing.

On 22 April 1945 the large SS-owned zone of Oranienburg, where Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen was situated, was virtually deserted. The first soldiers of the Red Army who approached the camp were hailed as liberators but had to march onward at once. The camp was in the sector of the front assigned to the Second Polish Infantry Division, which formed part of the Red Army. On the morning of 23 April parts of this division reached the SS zone and the camp.<sup>[2]</sup> On the same day, a "special commission of the political division" entered the camp, where it was welcomed by Polish and (Communist) German prisoners and shown around. A few hours later the Poles had to move on, however they managed to record a report about their impressions,<sup>[3]</sup> which was later reproduced in a book written by one of the Polish officers, Lieutenant Józef Margules.<sup>[4]</sup> As a matter of fact, this very first report from the Allied side is of limited value as it is essentially based on hearsay – all kinds of lurid horror stories the Communist prisoners had told their visitors. Only in the last days of April did the Red Army take possession of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. The entrance was again controlled by guards, and nobody was allowed to enter or leave the camp without a permit, a document the liberated prisoners could obtain quite easily.<sup>[5]</sup>

Alfred Reckendrees provides us with some information about the genesis of the "Prisoner's Report". This report written for the benefit of the Soviet liberators was probably the brainchild of Hellmut Bock, a Communist prisoner under whose supervision the document was drafted. According to Bock, a group of former prisoners who had stayed behind in the camp had decided to<sup>[6]</sup> *"collect evidence about the camp in order to make it available to future investigative authorities."*

Since the first draft was ready by 7 May, we may assume that Bock and his comrades had set to work in the last days of April.<sup>[7]</sup> Their “office” was probably Barrack 4 which the communist prisoners had converted into a “community block.”<sup>[8]</sup> Whether the Soviet investigators were already present in the camp at this early date, and to what extent they influenced this first draft, remains unknown. At the behest of the Moscow-based ESC, a Soviet investigative commission became active at Sachsenhausen on 12 May and stayed there until the end of June. The leader of the commission, Lt. Colonel Sharitch, undoubtedly learned of the existence of the draft at once. A great deal of circumstantial evidence suggests that the Soviets demanded numerous changes and additions until the final version was officially handed over to the Commission, which included the “Prisoner’s Report” in its own documentation about the camp.

## **2. The different versions of the report**

There are several versions of the “Prisoner’s Report,” most of them typewritten transcriptions or carbon copies. The first task of this writer was to establish the chronological order of the versions. His task was greatly facilitated by the fact that the report is subdivided into 11 chapters, a subdivision which remained largely unchanged in all eight versions. It was critically important to distinguish between versions the contents of which had undergone deliberate changes and transcriptions which contain but minor copying mistakes.

I have numbered the eight different versions of the “Prisoner’s Report” from HB-1 to HB-8 (HB stands for “*Häftlingsbericht*,” Prisoner’s Report). The first draft, HB-1, has been lost. To obtain copies of HB-3 and HB-4 I would have had to visit the archives, which was impractical for lack of time.

### **HB-1 - The First Draft**

The first draft of the report must have been ready by 7 May because on that day Dr. Emile Coudert, a French physician who had been employed at the camp hospital, criticized the document in a *Stellungnahme* (comment).<sup>[9]</sup> This first draft (we may exclude the possibility of an earlier version) has been lost; perhaps it languishes in some Russian archive. The other doctors, all of whom were foreign citizens, endorsed Dr. Coudert’s complaints and denounced the privileged position of the German prisoners during the existence of the camp.<sup>[10]</sup> In his response to the doctors Hellmut Bock pointed out that the draft contained a list of German prisoners who had mistreated their fellow inmates.<sup>[11]</sup>

### **HB-2 - The English translation**

Upon their return to the Netherlands the former prisoners Willem Frederik Bischoff van Heemskerck and Cand. Med. Johann Hers compiled a report about Sachsenhausen.<sup>[12]</sup> Both young men had studied medicine before the outbreak of the war, and Bischoff had for some time served in the Dutch army as a lieutenant. Both had been deported to Sachsenhausen because of their activities on behalf of the illegal resistance movement. During the final stage of the camp, Bischoff was Technical Director of the hospital barracks and Hers had worked there as an orderly. A copy of their report was made available to Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, and another copy apparently was forwarded to the British authorities.



*Fig. 1: Seeing off the French doctors Dr. Leboucher (left) and Dr. Coudert (right), Sachsenhausen, 23 June 1945. Second from right is Johann Hers (with shag pipe) and third from right is Frederik Bischoff (with tie).*

*Source: Gedenkstätte und Museum Sachsenhausen; published in: G. Morsch and Alfred Reckendress. See Endnote 1.*

“Part I” of the report is a text written in the English language and entitled “Report on Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen at Oranienburg”. In view of the fact that the title, the subdivision into chapters and the headings of these chapters in this English language document match those of the other versions of the Prisoner’s Report, there can be no doubt that the former is simply a translation of the latter.<sup>[13]</sup> Bischoff and Hers are mute as to the genesis of the original, however several clues suggest that their text is based on the first draft (HB-1). Probably the two Dutchmen, being co-signers of the Prisoner’s Report, had got a copy of HB-1. Back in Holland, Bischoff personally translated the report from German into English.<sup>[14]</sup>

Version HB-2 is by and large congruent with the later versions, which means that Bischoff’s translation must have been faithful to the original. On the other hand HB-2 contains a couple of passages which were eliminated in HB-7 and HB-8, and some passages which appear in the later versions are lacking here. Reckendrees<sup>[15]</sup> ventures the opinion that Bischoff and Hers took one of the later versions to Holland and made certain changes when they translated the text into English, but this thesis is not particularly convincing. In all likelihood the English version (HB-2) is a translation of the lost first draft (HB-1) and therefore the oldest known version of the Prisoner’s Report. Probably in 1946 the British handed over a copy of this report to the Russians, who later forwarded the document to Sachsenhausen.<sup>[16]</sup>

The “Report on Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen at Oranienburg” (HB-2) additionally contains four lists compiled by former Communist prisoners in May 1945. These documents (with Dutch language headings) list the names of SS men and prisoners accused of having committed crimes in the camp:

**1a** - *Die Lagerführer und Rapportführer von 1940-1945* [Camp Commandants and Rapporteurs from 1940-1945]

**1b** - *Blockführer und Verwaltungsbeamte, die als Mörder und Schläger sowie schwerbelastend [sic] aus dem Lager hervorgegangen sind* [Trusties and administrative officers who left the camp seriously implicated in murders and beatings].

**1c** - Camp elders who committed offenses against other inmates at Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen. [This heading is in Dutch, not in German. In Bischoff’s version the second part of the sentence is crossed

out by hand; apparently Bischoff did not share the opinion of the Communists about the respective camp elders.

**1d** - List of former inmates of Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen who have committed serious crimes (German heading).

List 1d is already mentioned in Bock's reply to the objections the doctors had raised against the first draft HB-111 . This corroborates our thesis that the translation HB-2 is indeed based on HB-1.

### **HB-3**

A photocopy of version HB-3 can be found at the archives of Sachsenhausen. [\[17\]](#) The report is dated 31 May 1945 and is therefore the earliest surviving German version. The length of the report (32 pages) is the same as in the later versions. It is only signed by Hellmut Bock and four other (Communist) prisoners, all of them German nationals.

According to Reckendrees [\[18\]](#) this version is "probably identical with the one presented in early May" (HB-1) which would mean that the first draft HB-1 is not lost but does still exist in the form of HB-3. If his assumption (HB-3 = HB-1) was true and our little thesis that HB-2 = HB-1 is also true, than HB-3 should also be in agreement with HB-2. However we believe that - as regards content - *there are* some differences between HB-3 and HB-1/HB-2 although we are momentarily unable to verify our thesis since the HB-3 version is available only in *Archiv Sachsenhausen*.

### **HB-4**

Having commented on the texts HB-1 and HB-3, Reckendrees mentions yet another draft, "probably the second one." [\[19\]](#) In accordance with our chronological numbering we will call it HB-4. Since we were unable to check this version, we have to rely on Reckendrees and are compelled to content ourselves with the following observations:

- The report is undated. Reckendrees claims it was finished by the beginning of June 1945.
- The signers are the same 12 persons as in the later version HB-7, among them by now ten non-German prisoners.
- The report contains an appendix about the situation of the foreign inmates. Reckendrees thinks that this was the version handed over to the Soviet governmental commission. According to Christl Wickert "*our actual state of knowledge [...] does not allow a definitive answer to the question which version was made available to the governmental commission.*" [\[20\]](#)

We can presume that the text of the Prisoner's Report was basically ready by late May or early June, except for a single but exceedingly important sentence which first appears in HB-5.

### **HB-5 - Willi Müller's Version**

This carbon copy of 32 pages on yellowish-ocher flimsy paper is from the estate of the former Communist camp elder Harry Naujoks who had after the liberation returned to his native city of Hamburg. It was sent to him by a certain Willi Müller from Bremen. [\[21\]](#) The typewriter used had the SS rune which suggests that HB-5 was written in May or June 1945 with a typewriter belonging to the former SS camp administration. At the very end of the text a sentence was inserted which we will discuss later.

Several handwritten addenda were made with ink (presumably by Naujoks), and some lengthy addenda in the same hand were inserted with paper clips. Apparently the carbon copy HB-5 had been sent to Naujoks in order to give him the means of making corrections or amendments. In the later versions some of these addenda are lacking.

### **HB-6 - A. Schöning's Copy**

Another typewritten version from Naujok's estate is probably a first carbon copy; this can be inferred from the clean type face on white onionskin. [\[22\]](#) The document ends with "A. Schöning, Hamburg 39, Himmelstr. 26 III". Most probably Schöning, who like Naujok lived in Hamburg, owned a typewriter and copied the text to do Naujok a favor. Apparently the changes suggested by Naujok (see HB-5) were largely made. Whether they were still present in the final version HB-7 I was unable to check.

### **HB-7 - The Final Version of the Prisoner's Report (12 June 1945)**

We may safely assume that HB-7 is the final version of the report which was handed over to the Soviet investigators. The report itself is undated, but the cover letter written by Hellmut Bock is dated "Oranienburg, den 12. Juni 1945". The original (with the signatures of the signers) is probably moldering in some Russian archive. On the other hand, we are in possession of a carbon copy (HB-7a), and there must have been a (presumable) transcription (HB-7b) both of which are probably based on the original. The (presumable) transcription HB-7b is only available in the form of a low-quality photocopy (HB-7c).

#### **HB-7a**

Version HB-7a, a text of 35 pages, is from the documents of Dr. Rudolf Pechel, a journalist and newspaper editor who had been detained in Sachsenhausen because he was suspected of high treason. [\[23\]](#) As in the case of HB-5, the text was written on ocher onionskin. This suggests that this text too was typed in the camp. As the document is letter-perfect, it is probably safe to conclude that this was the version handed over to the Soviet investigators by Hellmut Bock. Therefore HB-7a is presumably a carbon copy of the original.

#### **HB-7b**

It appears that soon after the war there was also made a typewriter transcription of the original, which we will call HB-7b. It was typed on a German typewriter which did not have the SS runes. It can be inferred from the archive stamps and the pagination that this copy once was, or still is, in some Moscow archive and that (later) a low-quality photocopy (HB-7c) was sent to Sachsenhausen.

#### **HB-7c**

In the left margin of the above-mentioned photocopy [\[24\]](#) we distinctly see the typical black spots which arise when copying sheets which are bound in a thick folder or looseleaf binder. When one puts such a folder or binder on a photocopier, the pages will inevitably be blackened in one of the two margins. Therefore the left margin of HB-7c was often illegible owing to the black spots, however it was always possible to complete the blackened words either from context or thanks to the versions HB-7a or HB-8. The question arises why the poor-quality photocopy HB-7c was not made from the original (HB-7) but from a copy (HB-7b). In all likelihood it was kept in the archives of the KGB (nowadays FSB) and

therefore practically inaccessible when the copy was needed. For this reason the copy had to be based on another copy, which was of low quality.

### **HB-8 - The Printed Version**

Probably in 1947 a brochure was produced entitled “Bericht über das Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen durch den ehemaligen Häftling Theodor Feuerlein” [Report on the Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen by the former prisoner Theodor Feuerlein].<sup>[25]</sup> Feuerlein, together with Bock, Engemann, Schöning and other Communists, figures on a list of Communist inmates who had stayed behind in the camp, and the title says clearly that he was the author of the report. The information Feuerlein provides about himself is extremely sparse: We only learn that he had been attached to the work commando Falkensee and remained in the camp until 3 May. But as the first draft of the report was only ready around 7 May and Feuerlein did not sign any of the different versions, he cannot possibly have been the author.

It is not difficult to guess why this brochure was published in 1947, before the Sachsenhausen trial: Quite obviously the German population was to be enlightened about the “crimes of the German Fascists” at Sachsenhausen. For reasons unknown to me it was purported that Feuerlein had been the author. It is therefore logical that neither the cover letter authored by Hellmut Bock nor the appendix “The Situation of the Foreign Prisoners” appears in this brochure: Both texts would have undermined the claim that Feuerlein was the author. The first sentences of the report (HB-7c, HB-8) also point to the conclusion that Feuerlein had little, if anything, to do with the genesis of the document.

The text HB-8, purportedly authored by Feuerlein, is to a considerable extent identical with HB-5, HB-6 and HB-7. But as the final draft HB-7, which was accessible in the Soviet Occupation Zone, contained several garbled passages, the text required some editing. The result of this “reconstruction” is HB-8 which enables us to understand the garbled passages in the previous versions. On the other hand, some minor new mistakes crept into HB-8. Finally, the text underwent a professional typesetting.

### **3. The Signers of the Prisoner’s Report**

Among the twelve signers of HB-7 there were two Germans, two Dutchmen, two Poles, one Czech, one Belgian, one Italian, one Slovak and one Frenchman. Apparently the Soviet investigators attached much value to the international character of this circle. Seven of the twelve signers had been employed at the camp hospital (Bischoff, Dr. Delaunois, Dr. Dederer, Dr. Feledy, Dr. Gyarmati, stud. med. Hers, stud. pharm. Wassermann). This was due to the fact that the sick inmates and the personnel of the hospital were not evacuated. Three other signers (Bock, Misiewicz and Pointner) belonged to the group of Communist prisoners. It is not clear which group the remaining two signers, the Polish mathematician Dombrowski and the French gardener Samon, belonged to. At the end of the report all twelve signers are listed with their names, dates of birth, countries of origin plus the date of their internment in the camp. In the following survey we only mention those prisoners about whom some details are known.

#### **- Willem Frederik Bischoff van Heemskerck (Freek Bischoff)**

Born in the Hague in 1917, interned at Sachsenhausen since 18 February 1941. Bischoff, who had been a lieutenant of the Dutch Army, was sent to Sachsenhausen for his activities on behalf of the resistance movement. During the last phase of the camp, he was technical director of the hospital barracks and block elder (*Blockältester*) in the hospital barrack R I. In HB-7 he signs as “Freek Bischoff.”

After his return home Bischoff was advanced to the rank of captain and started a career as “Equerry to the Queen of the Netherlands.”



*Fig. 2: F. W. Bischoff van Heemskerck as Senior Equerry (Opper Stalmeester) of the Royal Stables (ca. 1967)*

*Source: Koninklijke Verzamelingen.jpg*

Bischoff ended his career in 1980 as Master of the Royal Stables with the rank of a brigadier of the cavalry. He had been responsible not only for the horses but also for the motor pool. Furthermore he held several honorary posts, high decorations and was engaged in equitation. Frederik Willem Bischoff van Heemskerck died in 2007 in a Swiss hospital aged 89 years.



Fig. 3: F.W. Bischoff van Heemskerck as Brigadier and Master of the Royal Stables (ca. 1970)

Source: Dpa Picture Alliance; published in: *Reformatorisch*

*Dagblad*, [www.refdag.nl/achtergrond/koninklijk-huis](http://www.refdag.nl/achtergrond/koninklijk-huis) (30 June 2007).bs

#### - Hellmut Bock

Born on 25 February 1907. His last place of residence was Berlin. From 1925 to 1933, he was a member of the *SPD* (Social Democratic Party of Germany), but in 1933 he joined the *KPD* (Communist Party of Germany). Arrested on 22 September 1934, sentenced to five years in prison, transferred to Sachsenhausen on 30 November 1939. In addition to writing the "Prisoner's Report", Bock belonged to the group of prisoners who evaluated the SS statistics about the inmates [26] and compiled name lists.

#### - Dr. med. Elemer Gyarmati

Italian citizen of Hungarian descent, born in Turin on 22 April 1906, interned at Sachsenhausen since 1 August 1944. The reasons for his arrest and incarceration are unclear. Gyarmati worked as a doctor in the camp hospital. Like the other physicians, he was left behind with the sick inmates when the camp was evacuated. His case sheds light on the origin of the Prisoner's Report.

Allegedly Gyarmati was re-arrested on 6 May by the Soviets, who accused him of "collaboration with the Fascists". From August 1945 he was interned as prisoner No. 97179 in the newly established Soviet *Sonderlager* (special camp) without being formally charged with any crime. He once again worked as a doctor in the camp hospital before being released on 7 February 1950. [27] Having been sent to Sachsenhausen as late as August 1944 Gyarmati cannot have contributed much to the Prisoner's Report. In all likelihood he was encouraged to sign the report because the signers needed an Italian.

#### - cand. med. Johann Hers

Johann (Hans) Hers, a medical student from Holland, arrived at Sachsenhausen Camp on 13 October 1940. He worked in the camp hospital as an orderly. The liberated Dutch prisoners who wanted to



return to their country soon became the object of a tug-of-war between the Soviets and the Western Allies. In summer 1945, Hers twice secretly travelled to Berlin by the S-Bahn (which was still possible at that time) to ask the Western occupation authorities for help.

#### - Zbigniew Misiewicz

Born on 23 February 1925, interned at Sachsenhausen from 4 May 1940. In HB-7 Misiewicz (whose name is almost illegible) is mentioned as the third from the bottom of the foreign signers. According to the document, he was an electrician by profession. He must have learned his trade in the camp for at the moment of his arrest he was only 15 years old. Misiewicz was probably a Communist sympathizer already while still an inmate in the camp. After the war he joined the Communist Polish Workers' Party. He is named as a member of the author's team (*Autorenkollektiv*) of the Sachsenhausen standard work "Damals in Sachsenhausen." [28] Being born in the border town of Brest-Litovsk, he apparently knew some Russian so the Soviet Commission used him in 1945 as a witness and helper (Fig 4).



*Fig. 4: Zbigniew Misiewicz shows around members of the Soviet investigatory commission  
Photo: Gerasimow, May/June 1945; published by Gedenkstätte und Museum Sachsenhausen,  
Informationsblatt Nr. 24 "Soviet Sachsenhausen Trial 1947," Oranienburg 1999.*

#### - Hans Pointner

This textile worker from Vienna had been in the camp since 4 January 1940. Together with Bock and Feuerlein, he appears on the "list of Communists still at Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp". He was one of the five signers of version HB-3.

#### 4. The Interference of the Soviet investigators

In their introduction to the Prisoner's report (HB-7, HB-8) the authors point out that "the description of the facts is solely based on our memory. [...] For the sake of objectivity, we refrain from mentioning cases based on hearsay." This type of disingenuous assertion abounds in concentration camp literature

and should always be taken with a grain of salt. At least the final version of the report (HB-7) shows numerous traces of Soviet interference.

### **a) The Choice of the Co-signers**

Surprisingly there is not a single Soviet citizen among the signers, despite the fact that there were several Russians among the prisoners left behind at the camp and that there was no shortage of Soviet POWs and “*Ostarbeiter*” (foreign workers from the East) liberated by the Allies at Mecklenburg. Apparently the investigative commission had no desire to use their compatriots as witnesses because Soviet citizens who had fallen into German captivity or been sent to Germany as *Ostarbeiter* were viewed with suspicion by the Soviet “organs” [= security services]. As the Soviet POWs had surrendered to the “German Fascist Occupiers” and thus broken their oath to fight for Stalin until their last cartridge and their last breath, they were considered traitors. While the Red Army was shedding blood in fierce winter battles, they had wintered over with the “Fascists” and even survived the war, which was highly suspicious. The same applied to the *Ostarbeiter*, Soviet civilians who had been obliged to work for the German wartime economy. For the NKVD, all these Soviet citizens were objects of a rigorous screening. After their liberation, tens of thousands of them were deported to the camps of the *GULAG*.

### **b) Typical Soviet Diction**

Some of the catchwords and formulations found in the report were unknown in Germany until the end of the war but very typical for Soviet propaganda. The use of such words in the Prisoner’s Report strongly points to Soviet influence. Two examples will suffice to illustrate this:

After the Warsaw insurrection had been crushed, the Germans treated captured combatants of the Polish *Armia Krajowa* (Home Army) correctly in accordance with the Hague Conventions: As they wore uniforms and fought under a regular leadership, they were not partisans but qualified as regular prisoners of war. In September 1944, about 17,700 of these Polish POWs were sent to Sachsenhausen and its satellite camps. In the Prisoner’s Report [29] they are scornfully referred to as “elements who had sought the protection of the Fascist Wehrmacht”. This is typical Soviet jargon. It is well known that the Red Army, which was halted on the eastern shore of the Vistula, did not extend any effective assistance to the insurgents but idly stood by while the uprising was being crushed. The Soviets did not want the Polish nationalists to succeed because the Polish nationalists supported the London-based Polish government in exile and would have hindered the planned Sovietization of Poland.

The use of the word “*Okkupation*” for the German campaign against the Soviet Union is typical Soviet language as well. [30]

### **c) Vituperative propaganda**

It goes without saying that the prisoners had no reason to love the SS. All the same no invective is used in the oldest version of the report, HB-2. On the other hand, the massive use of invective in the later versions clearly recalls the hateful Soviet propaganda during the war, as documented by Joachim Hoffmann. [31] The SS men are labeled as “*Banditen*” (bandits, 9x), “*Strolche*” (thugs, 3x), “*Bestien*” (beasts, 2x) “*Verbrecher*” (criminals, 2x), “*Raubritter*” (highwaymen, twice) and “*Schinder*” (torturers), while female SS guards are called “*Furien*” (furies). The SS is described as a gang of sadists to whom order, laws and military discipline were unknown and who indulged in all kinds of mind-boggling atrocities according to their desire and mood without ever being rebuked by their superiors.

## 5. Comparison between the Different Texts

The following comparison between different versions of the report, which is limited to certain important aspects and concentrates on HB-2, HB-7c and HB-8, shows substantial differences, HB-2 being the shortest version. We will now examine some examples (the subtitles are taken directly from HB-7 and HB-2, respectively).

### General Remarks (*Allgemeines*)

One of the topics dealt with in this paragraph is the reception of the new arrivals at Sachsenhausen whom the *SS-Lagerführer* always greeted with a speech.<sup>[32]</sup> HB-2 contains two sentences referring to the Russians who had succumbed to typhus. We quote from Bischoff's English translation:

*"By the end of '41 such an oration [by the Lagerführer] used to be followed immediately by a kind of exhibition of a heap of nude and emaciated corpses of Russian prisoners starved to death. To clear [? - illegible] away what had remained of these unhappy fellows was the first task of the newcomers."*<sup>[33]</sup>

To what extent this description corresponds to the facts is open to discussion. In the later versions this passage disappeared.

### The situation of the foreign prisoners (omitted in HB-7)

HB-2 contains a few sentences which are obviously taken from a passage about the situation of the foreign prisoners. It is not clear if this text was collectively authored by the non-German signers or if only a few of them volunteered to contribute. One passage deals with the relationship between foreign and German inmates.<sup>[34]</sup> The English text runs as follows:

*"To the terror exerted by the SS was added the terror organised by the german [sic] prisoners. It was a masterly stroke of the SS to maintain the tensions in the camp by these alternative regimes of german [sic] ruffians and political prisoners, who towards the foreign prisoners fancied themselves "Die Herren der Welt" (The World's Rulers), and as a sequel of this policy a united front of the prisoners between them and the campleaders was practically out of the question."*

The authors here allude to the fact that the camp and block elders were alternately recruited among the criminal and the political prisoners (the former wore a green, the latter a red triangle). These frequent changes greatly influenced the mood prevailing in the camp. The foreign prisoners stated:<sup>[35]</sup>

*"Alas there were a good deal more bad "Blockältesten" than good ones, which gave us foreigners a true picture of the average German's mentality."*

In HB-7c and HB-8 these passages are missing. HB-7 has a one-page appendix entitled "Die Lage der ausländischen Häftlinge" ("The Situation of the Foreign Prisoners", pp. 31-32). Had the foreign inmates, among them several medical doctors, not been able to write more than one single page? Hardly, but their text was apparently slashed by the Soviet investigators.

### The Work of the Prisoners (*Arbeitseinsatz der Häftlinge*)

This chapter contains a list of the construction works performed from 1936-1944. The text and the list are virtually identical in HB-2, HB-7c and HB-8. The third-from-the-last object mentioned on the list ("Construction work in 1944") is of particular interest because both German versions refer to a "special

camp for imprisoned officers of the Allied powers.” [36] In the English version HB-2 this sector is simply called “Shelters for special units.” [37] What were these “special units”? Did Bock as the author of the Prisoner’s Report perhaps allude to the fact that Allied officers were interned in this “special camp”? The inmates could hardly be expected to know any details, for Zone II was strictly separated from the Camp triangle (also called the Great Camp or Zone I). As a matter of fact, most inmates of the “special camp” apparently belonged to two groups: Prominent Allied POWs and notorious escapees. This was also the place where Stalin’s son Jacob Dzhugashvili lived before committing suicide on 14 April 1943.

### **The Hospital (*Krankenbau*)**

In mid-November 1941 a heavy epidemic of typhus broke out in the camp. HB-2 contents itself with one laconic sentence: [38] “In 1941 a typhoid epidemic broke out putting the camp in quarantine for some months.” HB-7 and HB-8 provide us with more detailed information: [39]

*“Immediately after the murder of the Red Army soldiers in November 1941 typhus transmitted by lice broke out in the camp. Only thanks to the energetic intervention of the prisoners, especially the then camp elder Harry Naujocks [should be Naujoks] and Werner Staacke, could catastrophic consequences be averted.”*

With regard to this epidemic a short explanation seems appropriate. Spotted fever (typhus exanthemicus), alternatively called “spotted typhus” or simply “typhus”, is caused by the virus *Rickettsia prowaseki* and transmitted by lice. If no medical treatment is administered, more than 50% of the sufferers die. [40] In order to forestall outbreaks of this dangerous epidemic, it was a general measure taken in all camps, that all newly arrived prisoners had to be deloused with Cuprex, while their clothes were disinfected with Zyklon-B, and to undergo a quarantine of two weeks.

This disease is often confused with typhoid fever which is caused by the bacillus *Salmonella typhi*, an epidemic not transmitted by lice but by feces-polluted water and food.

Although in HB-2 the German word “Typhus” was correctly translated as “typhoid epidemic” (typhoid fever), the reference to “lice” clearly shows that the epidemic which had broken out in November 1941 was typhus (German “*Fleckfieber*” or “*Flecktyphus*”).

### **Masses pour into the Camp (*Masseneinweisungen*)**

The English language version HB-2 states: [41]

*“In 1944 the total strength with the outdoor camps and building units amounted to more than 75,000 prisoners. In this figure the chief groups shared as follows: 9,000 Russians, 5,000 Poles, 3,000 Frenchmen...”*

The figure of 75,000 is an obvious transcription error. The real figure was 25,000, for in HB-7c we read: [42]

*“Only after the outbreak of the war were so many foreigners sent to the camp that the Germans constituted a minority. At a time when the total number of inmates amounted to 25,000, there were about 9,000 Russians, 5,000 Poles and 3,000 Frenchmen in the camp.”*

The figure of 25,000 corresponds approximately to the situation in 1943. HB-8 again contains two mistakes: [43]

*“Only after the outbreak of the war were so many foreigners sent to the camp that the Germans constituted a unity [“Einheit”, should be: “Minderheit” (minority)]. At a time when the total number of inmates amounted to 25,000, there were about 9,000 Frenchmen [should be: “Russians”], 5,000 Poles, 3,000 Frenchmen in the camp.”*

### **Public Executions (Öffentliche Hinrichtungen)**

HB-2 laconically states:[\[44\]](#) “In 1942 the first prisoner was hanged by *Lagerführer* Suhren...”. In this context the crematorium worker Paul Sakowski, who together with some of his colleagues had to carry out executions by hanging, is mentioned for the first time: “The political prisoner Sakowski officiated as hangman.” [\[45\]](#) HB-7c provides some additional information: “The first person hanged by order of *Lagerführer* Suhren was a BV[\[46\]](#) who had attempted to escape on the first day of Whitsuntide. The political prisoner SAKOWSKI officiated as hangman.” [\[47\]](#)

Paul Sakowski, born in 1920, was the son of a Communist functionary from Breslau. When he was deported to Sachsenhausen, he was just 18 years old, which made him the youngest political prisoner. His older Communist fellow-inmates, who had known his father, took Paul under their wing. After a brawl he was first locked up in the camp prison and then employed as a worker in the crematorium. Although he had not volunteered for the job of a hangman, the other prisoners, especially the Communists, resented him for his “collaboration with the Fascists” (“Other young prisoners would rather have hanged themselves!”). After the war, the Soviets branded him as the “hangman of Sachsenhausen”, and at the Sachsenhausen Trial in Berlin, he - the petty crematorium worker - was put in the dock together with the former SS leaders – a truly grotesque situation!



*Fig. 5: Paul Sakowski as defendant in the Sachsenhausen trial (Berlin-Pankow, Oct. 1947)  
Source: Soviet press releases, 1947 (open source)*

In October 1947, Sakowski, like most of the other defendants, was sentenced to 25 years and sent to Workuta in Northern Russia where the former camp commandant Anton Kaindl and some other former members of his staff died within months. The sixty-year-old Karl Zander, Sakowsky’s colleague from the crematory, died within some weeks. In late 1955 or early 1956, Sakowski was handed over to the authorities of the GDR and served his 25 years to the very last day. Although made under duress, his

statements during his interrogations by the NKVD and later the East German Ministry for State Security are important historical sources.



Fig. 6 and 7: Paul Sakowski as long-term prisoner in the GDR, left in 1955 (35 years old) and right ca. 1970 (50 years old)

Source: Records Department of former GDR penal system; published in *BILD Zeitung* (Berlin) of 4 March 2002, p. 10.

### **Liquidations (*Liquidierungsaktionen*)**

This chapter addresses various crimes ascribed to the SS. We content ourselves with three examples.

#### **a) The “*Russenaktion*” (autumn 1941)**

It is an established historical fact that in autumn 1941 a number of Soviet prisoners of war were shot at Sachsenhausen and in some other camps (“*Russenaktion*”). In all likelihood the victims were political commissars (*politicheskie rukovoditeli*, *politruks*) who were usually called “*Kommissare*” by the Germans. Each unit of the Red Army had its *politruk* who acted as a watchdog for the commanding military officer. The National Socialist leadership (Hitler, Himmler, Heydrich) regarded these men as the driving force behind the fanatical Bolshevik resistance and denied them the status of combatants. This gave rise to the highly controversial “*Kommissarbefehl*” according to which all captured commissars were to be shot on the spot. But the commissars could not easily be identified, their only distinguishing mark being a red star on their sleeve which could easily be removed. This allowed many captured commissars to hide among the masses of Soviet POWs. Following an order by Heydrich, the Soviet prisoners of war in the camps were screened; those who turned out to be commissars were to be “sorted out” whereupon they were transferred to the nearest concentration camp and shot there.

Another aspect of the question of Soviet POWs was that they did not benefit from the protection of the 1907 Hague Convention and the 1929 Geneva Convention because the Soviet Union had denounced the Hague Convention in 1919 and never signed the Geneva Convention. Owing to this fact the Soviet prisoners of war were disadvantaged compared to POWs from the other allied nations in many respects (lodging, food rations, the right to receive parcels, to write letters etc.). All the same they too were entitled to humane treatment, and the Wehrmacht never carried out any mass killings of Soviet POWs.

Soviet postwar propaganda ably conflated the fact that the Russian prisoners were treated worse than POWs from other countries with the legally questionable shootings of commissars. This gave birth to all kinds of horror stories about the gruesome fate of the Soviet prisoners of war. In the earliest version of the Prisoner's Report (HB-2, Bischoff's English translation of the first draft), the alleged mass murder of the Russian prisoners is described as follows: [\[48\]](#)

***“September – December 1941.** 16,000 Russian prisoners, driven together like cattle, were slaughtered. On the grounds of the industry-department [a better translation of the German word “Industriehof” would have been “industrial yard”] four riding furnaces were standing so that the corpses could be cleared away uninterruptedly. Their ashes became the site for the new crematory. Before these people were murdered they were beastly ill-treated. Music out of big loudspeakers deafened the shrieking of the victims. The Russian prisoners brought into the concentration camp were outlawed. One Sunday afternoon three Russian soldiers were standing near the gate of the camp. A Blockführer suddenly hit upon the idea of opening a window and using them for target practice.*

***End December [1941].** 2,500 war prisoners remained. According to official information they would not be finished. Six barracks were specially closed and a board bearing the words “War prisoners labour camp” [Kriegsgefangenen-Arbeitslager] was attached. The commandant Loritz made the Blockführers on duty (Bugdalla, Knittler and Fickert) responsible for not one single prisoner leaving this camp alive. Their supply was half a ration of a normal prisoner.”*

In this context it should be mentioned that the shootings with small-caliber pistols were carried out in a big wooden storage shed in the northern sector of the Industrial Yard which was screened by walls and buildings. Except for the approximately eight crematorium workers, few other prisoners were employed there. The bulk of the inmates had no access to this sector and could therefore neither see nor hear what was transpiring there – a situation which favored the development of wild rumors. Several crucial aspects of the *Russenaktion*, such as the date when the killings began and the number of victims, still remain obscure.

In the easily readable copy HB-7a of Dr. Rudolf Pechel, page 30, where the chapter “*Liquidierungsaktionen*” begins, is unfortunately lacking. The next version, HB-7c, is the most garbled of all and contains the highest number of illegible passages. However, the garbled and unreadable passages of HB-7c are corrected in Feuerlein's version HB-8. The description of the *Russenaktion* in the later versions is based on HB-2 but enhanced by further horror stories, and the diction of the text shows beyond doubt that the Soviet commission had “improved” the text: [\[49\]](#)

***“September - October 1941.** After the initial successes of the invasion of the Soviet Union the Fascist criminals abandoned all pretense to humanity. They were overcome with murderous frenzy and gave free rein to their bloodlust. In Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen 16,000 Russian prisoners of war, soldiers of the Red Army, were driven together like cattle and slaughtered in the most horrendous way. On the grounds of the so-called industrial yard there were four mobile crematorium ovens by means of which the bodies were uninterruptedly disposed of. Their ashes were the ground on which the new crematorium was built. Before the people were slain, strangled, kicked to death or killed in other fanciful ways by the beasts, they were fiendishly tormented. The SS transformed these orgies of murder into real celebrations. Brandy flowed like water, and the loudspeakers drowned out the cries of the victims. The killers did not care to make sure that the victims were dead before being cremated; many of them were still alive when they were shoved into the ovens.*

*The Russian prisoners of war deported to Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen were free game; any SS thug could kill them according to his desire and mood. One Sunday afternoon three Russian soldiers were standing at the camp gate. On the spur of the moment the Blockführers decided to use them for target practice.*

*At the end of October 2,500 prisoners of war officially not destined for liquidation were still in the camp. Six barracks were ring-fenced and designated as "Kriegsgefangenen-Arbeitslager" (POW working camp). The commandant Loritz ordered the serving Blockführers Budgalle, Knittler and Fickert to ensure that no prisoner left this camp alive. It is hardly necessary to point out that they fulfilled this task to his complete satisfaction.*

*After the long marches they had been forced to perform, the prisoners of war arrived in a state of total exhaustion. Their clothes were little more than rags. Upon their arrival they had to stand in the open air the whole day without coats and headgear. They only received half of the rations allotted to other prisoners. At night they slept in completely empty rooms without straw and blankets. Of course these rooms were not heated. It goes without saying that the SS bandits would not leave the prisoners of war alone at night. Their diseased imagination knew no limits. Knittler chose a row of sleeping prisoners whose heads formed a straight line, shot them with his pistol and then counted the heads pierced by the bullet. SS-Scharführer Maierhöfer had cages with rats attached to the naked bodies of captured Russian soldiers so that they were chewed alive.*

*The prisoners who served as Blockführers at the POW camp were recruited from the worst elements. They contributed to the extermination of the prisoners of war by stealing their rations and passing on to the SS what they did not consume themselves.*

*By mid-February 1945 hardly 700 of these 2,500 captured soldiers of the Red Army were still alive. As a reward for their "efforts" during these massacres, all SS men who had taken part in them were allowed to take a trip to Italy and were awarded the war merit cross."*

Where on earth had Bock and his comrades gotten all this information? The prisoners had no access to the northern industrial court. The handful of crematorium workers who had to dispose of the dead bodies were bound to strict secrecy and lodged apart from the other inmates. Accordingly not a single witness is mentioned in the reports of the "Russenaktion". Nor do we learn when the first Soviet POWs arrived at Sachsenhausen or when their "slaughter" began. As to the killing method, the authors of the report remain rather vague. Apparently they did not know anything about prisoners being shot in the back of the neck through an opening in the wall (a method described in detail by subsequent inmate-authors) until their memory was duly refreshed (see following paragraph).

As to the number of the murdered Soviet prisoners, the various versions of the report concordantly mention a figure of 16,000 victims. However the head of the Soviet commission, Lt. Colonel Sharitch, did not repeat this figure. In his final report, he summarized the "Russenaktion" rather laconically: [\[50\]](#)

*"At the camp there were also Soviet prisoners of war. They arrived in large groups at the Sachsenhausen camp for a special purpose – liquidation. No statistics were kept about this category of prisoners. The Russian prisoners of war were kept behind barbed wire in special barracks and isolated from the other inmates. They did not even get the scanty rations allotted to the other prisoners."*



The first Soviet drafts of a report about Sachsenhausen [51] which were produced between May and September 1945 speak of 14,000 shot Soviet POWs while the figure given in later drafts is 13,000 to 14,000. In the GDR it was claimed that 18,000 Russian soldiers had been shot. These contradictory numbers prove that none of the authors possessed any tangible information. All figures given are mere guesswork based on atrocity propaganda. On the other hand, it is a proven fact that SS officers who had received the war merit cross at around that time were rewarded with a vacation in Italy. (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8: “Taratella for German soldiers” – SS officers attending a folkloric festival on Capri, alleged to be the Blockführers of Sachsenhausen who had been shooters in the Russenaktion. Source: Hamburger Illustrierte, (Spring?) 1942

A German magazine reported this fact, and its cover showed the honorees in uniform attending a folklore show on the island of Capri. Since the German press were available in the camp library, those compiling the *Häftlingsbericht* had the notion supplied to them quite graphically.

#### **b) The Gas Chamber and the Neck-Shot Facility**

Both the gas chamber and the neck-shooting facility play a considerable role in the Soviet propaganda about Sachsenhausen. Significantly neither the former nor the latter is even mentioned in the oldest known version of the Prisoner’s Report (HB-2). The undated version HB-5 (32 pages) does not contain any reference to these killing facilities either. The last chapter (“*Liquidierungsaktionen*”) ends with the evacuation of the camp and the sentence: “About 400 healthy inmates, among them 200 women and 40 German political prisoners, stayed behind voluntarily, defying the order of the SS.” However, this last sentence is followed by yet another sentence which is neatly stuck on a piece of the same other onionskin somewhat lower than the rest of the lines (unfortunately the archives rules did not allow the author to copy this page). This sentence runs as follows:

*“The mass murders in the crematorium were carried out either by shooting in the neck or in the gas chamber.”*

Although the authors had been working on their report for five weeks (April/May 1945) the expressions “shooting in the neck” and “gas chamber” appear for the first time in HB-5. Had Hellmut Bock, under whose supervision the document was being drafted, and his comrades really forgotten about these murder facilities? Or were they simply ignorant of their existence? There is every reason to believe that this last sentence was added at the behest of the Soviet investigators. The likewise undated version HB-6 has an appendix, correctly designated as such, which this time is not stuck on the page with glue but typewritten:

*“Appendix*

*During the action against political prisoners in 1944 the main accomplices of the special commission were the following prisoners: The camp elder Samuel Kühnke, the camp elder Kuert Beier, the foreman Kokoschinsky. The mass murders in the crematorium were carried out either by shooting in the neck or in the gas chamber.”*

In Version HB-7, which dates from 12 June 1945, the last chapter “Liquidierungsaktionen” ends on page 31. On first inspection, the “very last sentence” about the shots in the neck and the gas chamber seems to be lacking. But in fact, it is still there but in a slightly different place, in the middle of page 31. It is logically unconnected to both the preceding and the following sentences. Finally in Feuerlein’s version (HB-8) the ominous sentence is in the same place as in HB-7, but it now forms its own paragraph.

Let us recall that while the report was being drafted, the Soviet commission was carrying out its investigations in the camp. One of its sections was a technical group consisting of three officers with engineering degrees. The Soviet technicians carefully studied the abandoned but intact crematorium where a small room of 2.9 x 3.9 m was “identified” as a former gas chamber. [52] Even today visitors to Sachsenhausen are told that this room formerly served as a “gas chamber”. It would have been greatly embarrassing if the former inmates of Sachsenhausen had known nothing of a “gas chamber” in May and June 1945!

### **c) The Rat Torture**

Let us return to version HB-7c. In the chapter “Liquidierungsaktionen” (bottom of page 29, almost illegible) we find the following sentence: *“SS-Scharführer Maierhöfer had cages with rats attached to the naked bodies of captured Russian soldiers so that they were devoured alive.”*

This gruesome but hardly credible story is the result of a simple copying mistake. Feuerlein’s version (top of page 20) is slightly less horrible and less incredible: The prisoners were not “devoured” (*aufgefressen*) but only “chewed on” (*angefressen*) by the hungry rodents.

Here it is – the rat torture! In the 1920s German and other Western newspapers reported that this method was practiced by the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War. Probably Hitler had read these reports, too, for after Stalingrad he voiced his fear that captured German officers might be forced “with the rat” to make any statements desired by their jailers. A description of the rat torture is also found in George Orwell’s post-war masterpiece *1984*. The protagonist of the novel, Winston Smith, is so utterly terrified by the sight of a caged, stinking, hungry rat directly in front of his face that he betrays his lover and becomes a faithful follower of Big Brother.

Whether this atrocious torture was really practiced in any country and by any regime is open to discussion but it was certainly not practiced at Sachsenhausen. Whoever makes such wild claims is under the obligation to produce hard evidence. No former inmate and no SS man ever claimed to have witnessed such a scene. Only the professional criminal Erwin Rathmann, a man blessed with a particularly fevered imagination, mentions the rat torture although he does not claim to have seen it himself. We quote his statement without any modifications as translated into English. It contains several illegible words:[\[53\]](#)

*“All those murders were horribly carried out:*

- the victims [lost] their eyes from a strong jet of water played on the eyes by a [ho]se;*
- starved rats were placed in glass containers and hung [at?] the body of the victim so that he was eaten alive;*
- or hand grenades were hung around the body of the victim with strings attached to them which when pulled exploded.”*

Heinrich Lienau, an old Social Democrat whom clear-sighted fellow inmates aptly called a “rumor-monger” and a “teller of fairy tales”, mentions the rat torture in his book,[\[54\]](#) his informant being - Erwin Rathmann. Not content with the rat horror, Lienau serves his readers another mind-boggling atrocity story, a prisoner being quartered alive! To cut a long story short, the rat torture at Sachsenhausen is nothing but malign slander, however it perfectly reflected the spirit of those days. That the Soviet propagandists regularly used prisoners of the Germans to spread their atrocity tales fits the picture.

The example of the rat torture illustrates the hollowness of the claim that the authors of the Prisoner’s Report had only mentioned facts they had personally witnessed. As a matter of fact, we cannot even be sure that the lurid rat story had been invented by the former prisoners; it may very well have been the brainchild of the Soviet commission.

## **6. Summary**

A comparison between the different versions of the Prisoner’s Report shows that the relatively sober, if biased report of the Communist inmate Hellmut Bock and his comrades was enhanced by an array of new horror stories. Without the slightest doubt this was done at the behest of the Soviet commission which was carrying out “investigations” in the camp. At least partially, the Prisoner’s Report, one of the earliest documents about the situation prevailing at Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, may be a useful historical source, but owing to the interference of the Soviet authorities, quite obviously became a piece of atrocity propaganda.

On 2 November 1945, shortly after the Berlin show trial against the SS command staff of Sachsenhausen, Hellmut Bock led a meeting of the “Victims of Fascism” (*OdF*) which took place at a movie theater in Berlin-Friedrichshain. Bock thanked the Soviet people for the trial and rejected critical comments about the way it had been conducted. On the other hand, some of the “discoveries” made by the Soviet military tribunal seem to have dumbfounded him, for he stated that the Soviet authorities had “exposed crimes we did not know anything about”[\[55\]](#) According to a former fellow inmate[\[56\]](#) Hellmut Bock was “sent packing” in 1949 or 1950. He died in 1990.

## Abbreviations

- AS** *Archiv Sachsenhausen*
- ESC** Extraordinary State Commission
- FSB** *Federalnaja Sluzhba Besopasnosti*
- GARF** State Archives of the Russian Federation
- GDR** German Democratic Republic
- HB** *Häftlingsbericht* (Prisoner's Report)
- KGB** Soviet Secret Service (*Komitet Gosudarstvennoj Besopasnosti*), 1954-1991
- NKVD** *Narodni Kommissariat Vnutrenikh Djel* (Soviet Security Service of the Ministry of Interior)
- OdF** Victims of Fascism (*Opfer des Faschismus*)
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## Notes:

- [1] Alfred Reckendrees, „Das Leben im befreiten Lager“ [Life in the Liberated Camp], in: Günter Morsch and Alfred Reckendrees (ed.), *Befreiung Sachsenhausens 1945 [The Liberation of Sachsenhausen in 1945]*, Schriftenreihe der Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten, Volume 7, Edition Hentrich, Berlin 1996.
- [2] Peter Jahn, „Die Befreiung des Konzentrationslagers Sachsenhausen im Verlauf der Kampfhandlungen zur Eroberung Berlins“ (The Liberation of Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen during the Combat Operations for the Conquest of Berlin), in: Morsch and Reckendrees, *Befreiung Sachsenhausens*, op. cit., p. 82-89, Footnote 24.
- [3] *Bericht der polnischen Militär-Kommission im KL Sachsenhausen vom 23. April 1945 [Report of the Polish Military Commission in Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen, 23 April 1945]*, Central Military Archive in Warsaw, Organization and Combat Operations of the Polish People's Army in 1943-45. Document Selection, IV, Warsaw 1963, p. 831-833.
- [4] Jozef Margules, *Piechurzy Kolobrzskiej Piatki*, Warsaw 1967. A partial German translation can be found in *Sachsenhausen*; in AS, Sign. 27/37, p. 279-302.
- [5] In August 1945 the camp was handed over to the NKVD and became part of the Gulag as “Spezlag No. 1”.

- [6] Hellmut Bock, „Begleitschreiben zum Häftlingsbericht vom 12.Juni 1945 [Cover letter to the Prisoner’s Report of 12 June, 1945]; GARF 1525-1-340 T3 – 305; AS 235 M 173 Vol. 3 p. 148.
- [7] Reckendrees, op. cit. p. 104, p. 109 (endnotes 15 und 16).
- [8] Reckendrees, op. cit. p. 102.
- [9] Dr. Emile Coudert, „*Stellungnahme*“ (Comment). 7 May 1945, in: AS LAG I/7.
- [10] Comment of the doctors, typewritten transcript or carbon copy, in: AS, without signature.
- [11] [Hellmut Bock], Response to the comments of the foreign doctors, copy, Oranienburg, undated (about 10 May), in: AS LAG I/7/1.
- [12] F.W.K. Bischoff van Heemskerck and J.F.Ph. Hers, *Rapport over het Concentratiekamp Sachsenhausen [Report on the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp]*, unpublished, The Hague, September 1945. RIOD, 250k, 27 Sachsenhausen No. 59, File 327; Copy in AS No. 59, File 3.
- [13] N.N., “Report on Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen at Oranienburg”, translated into English and signed by Bischoff. The reports corresponds to “Part I” of the report made by Bischoff and Hers.
- [14] F.W. Bischoff van Heemskerck, statement made during a telephone conversation with the author (15 December 2004). Mr. Bischoff, who was born in 1917, was 87 years old at the time of this conversation.
- [15] Reckendrees, op. cit., p. 104.
- [16] War Crimes Investigation Unit BAOR (British Army of the Rhine), “Report on Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp”, 19 March 1946. SA Moscow, 1525-1-340,T. 3, Bl. 453 - 475; Copy in AS 235 M 173, Volume. 3, Bl. 219 - 239.
- [17] „Bericht über das Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen“ (Report on Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen), dated 31 May 1945, signed by Hans Pointner, Fritz Winzer, Walter Engemann, Hans Behr and Hellmut Bock. AS LAG II/2.
- [18] Reckendrees, p. 104 and p. 109, endnote 15.
- [19] „Bericht über das Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen“ (Report on Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen), undated. Copy in RIOD 250k, 27 Sachsenhausen no. 59, File 2; Copy (with different pagination) in AS LAG I/6. Quoted according to Reckendrees, p. 109 (endnote 17).

- [20] Christl Wickert, „Die Aufdeckung der Verbrechen durch die sowjetische Regierungskommission im Sommer 1945 und ihre Folgen“ [The Exposure of Crimes by the Soviet Governmental Commission in Summer 1945 and Its Consequences], in: Morsch/Reckendrees, p. 125 (endnote 2).
- [21] AS 6/31 (formerly I/6 – „Nachlaß von Harry Naujoks“ [Harry Naujoks’ estate), Copy on ocher onionskin, undated, handwritten note “via Willi Müller, Bremen“.
- [22] AS 6/31 (formerly I/6 - Harry Naujoks’ inheritance), archives’ pagination 40-59 (original pagination 1-12, rest without pagination).
- [23] Häftlingsbericht HB-7a, carbon copy from the documents of Dr. Rudolf Pechel, first kept at the archives of Walter Hammer, nowadays at the IfZ Archives, ED 106, Volume 74.
- [24] [Hellmut Bock and others], „Bericht Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen“ (Report on Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen), vorgelegt der Untersuchungskommission der UdSSR zur Untersuchung von Verbrechen der deutschen Faschisten im Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen, Oranienburg, den 12. Juni 1945 (Presented to the Investigative Commission of the USSR for the Investigation of the Crimes of the German Fascists at Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen, Oranienburg, 12 June 1945). *GARF*, 1525-1-340, T. 3, p. 31350 – 31382 (or sheets 351-383); Copy in AS 235 M. 173 Vol. 3, sheets. 148 -181.
- [25] Feuerlein, Theodor, *Bericht über das Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen* (Report on Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen), Landesdruckerei Sachsen, Dresden [1947].
- [26] Klaus Schwensen, “The Number of Victims of Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp 1936-1945”, *Inconvenient History*, Vol. 4, Fall 2012.  
Online: [http://www.inconvenienthistory.com/archive/2012/volume\\_4/number\\_3/the\\_number\\_of\\_victims\\_of\\_sachsenhausen.php](http://www.inconvenienthistory.com/archive/2012/volume_4/number_3/the_number_of_victims_of_sachsenhausen.php)
- [27] The date and the reason of Gyarmati’s re-arrest are mentioned in the camp diary of the *Spezlag* (Special Camp) Sachsenhausen which is now at *GARF*. The diary is also preserved with the Tracing Service (*Suchdienst*) of the German Red Cross. We owe this information to Mrs. Gisela Gneist † (Hamburg), leader of the “Consortium Sachsenhausen 1945-1950”. Gneist had been arrested by the *NKVD* – as a 15-year-old schoolgirl – in autumn 1945 due to “anti-Soviet activities”. She had been interned in Sachsenhausen from 1945-50, together with all her class comrades. Most of the boys died of starvation. She remembered Dr. Gyarmati very well, since he was the doctor who was responsible for the women in the Soviet *SpezLag*.
- [28] Autorenkollektiv (edited by the Committee of Antifascist Resistance Fighters in the German Democratic Republic), *Damals in Sachsenhausen*, Kongress Verlag, Berlin, undated (1961).

- [29] Häftlingsbericht HB-7, p. 20 and HB-8, p. 13 respectively.
- [30] Häftlingsbericht HB-7, S. 28.
- [31] Hoffmann, Joachim, *Stalins Vernichtungskrieg 1941 – 1945*, Verlag für Wehrwissenschaften, Munich 1995.
- [32] After the commandant, the *Lagerführer* was the second man in the camp. He was responsible for the organization and the daily routine. The *Lagerführer* frequently changed; their respective names are registered in HB-2. Appendix, List 1a.
- [33] Häftlingsbericht HB-2, p.1.
- [34] Häftlingsbericht HB-2, p.1-2 (English translation by Bischoff).
- [35] Häftlingsbericht HB-2, p. 3.
- [36] Häftlingsbericht HB-7, p. 14 snf. HB-8, p. 9 respectively.
- [37] Häftlingsbericht HB-2, p. 8.
- [38] Häftlingsbericht HB-2, p. 10.
- [39] Häftlingsbericht HB-7, p. 18 and HB-8 p. 12.
- [40] *Meyers Großes Universal Lexikon*, Vol. 5, Bibliographical Institute Mannheim/Vienna/Zurich, 1982.
- [41] Häftlingsbericht HB-2, p. 11.
- [42] Häftlingsbericht HB-7, p. 21.
- [43] Häftlingsbericht HB-8, p. 14.
- [44] Häftlingsbericht HB-2, p. 13.
- [45] Häftlingsbericht HB-3, p. 25.
- [46] BV = „Befristete Vorbeugungshaft“ (terminable prevention custody), characterized by a green triangle. This category of prisoners consisted of criminal repeat offenders, in the jargon of the other inmates called “Berufsverbrecher” (“professional criminals”).
- [47] Häftlingsbericht HB-7c, p. 25.
- [48] Häftlingsbericht HB-2, p. 13.
- [49] Häftlingsbericht HB-7c, S. 28-30 (faulty); better: HB-8, p. 19-20.

- [50] A. Sharitsch, Final Report of 29.6.1945, *GARF 7021-104-2*, Bl. 14-41; Copy in AS, 232, M. 159, Bl. 1-43; German translation in StAnw Köln, 24 Ks 2/68 (Z), Sonderakten, Vol. 13, Bl. 57-105. As for the "Russenaktion" see. the Russian original p. 5/18; German translation by Arloser, S. 8/64.
- [51] Klaus Schwensen, *The Report of the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission on Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp*, *Inconvenient History* Vol. 3 No. 4 (Winter 2011), or: [http://www.inconvenienthistory.com/archive/2011/volume\\_3/number\\_4/the\\_report\\_of\\_the\\_soviet\\_extraordinary\\_state\\_commission.php](http://www.inconvenienthistory.com/archive/2011/volume_3/number_4/the_report_of_the_soviet_extraordinary_state_commission.php)
- [52] Wloch, Teljaner and Grigorjew, *Akt* (Technical Report), *GARF 7021-104-3*, p. 1-20.
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